



(Image: <http://culturalorganizing.org/tag/blacklivesmatter/>)

BLACK LIVES MATTER ZINE



WELCOME TO BLM ZINE,

Thank you for taking the time to explore this zine that was constructed to address the marginalities of Black people of color in today's American society. Black Lives Matter takes a firm stand as an organization dedicated to take action against racial injustices and to validate Black life. The threat of oppression has plagued the community of color in ways unimaginable by reality. From the time Black people were brought here from the shores of Africa, they were enslaved by the system. This is the system that progressively evolved over time, blanketing itself behind closed doors, mirroring the justification of taming the black persons. These threats were posed with continual authoritarian violence, mass incarceration, criminalization, and Reagan's War on Drugs to name a few.

Black people of color were dehumanized classifications of second-class citizens leading up to the Civil Rights, but did you know that those same dishonorable characterizations and challenges are affecting black individuals today? Are you familiar with the disparities facing Black people in this country? The Civil Rights movement didn't end black oppression, and the government didn't turn its face towards equality. In this zine, you will find a series of short essays that reveal the targeted effort to detain and subject Black people of color. Through each of these pages, you will be introduced to the issues surrounding Black Lives today through mass incarceration, threats of police violence, criminalization of drugs, and intersectionality. What you will also find is the enduring fight that our leading predecessors have passed onto us, and how Black Lives Matter continues to fight for the preservation of Black life and against Black injustice. We learn from our history and follow the footsteps of the iconic individuals that gave their life for the liberation of Black individuals. Throughout this zine, there will be information to empower yourself to get involved with Black Lives Matter and how you can support the movement towards starting a dialogue and changing the perception of Black individuals.

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The Rise of Mass Incarceration

The image of the Black individual has been under attack for generations. Black bodies have been the target of mass industrialized policies implemented to proliferate the oppression of the Black community. Modern strategies of increased oppression appear in cases of hyper-incarceration, stemming from the naturalized image of Black man as criminal. Historically, the enforcement of segregation and false narratives accusing Black men as being rapists set the precedent for Richard Nixon to call for Law and Order and capitalized on white resentment of black equality. Nixon's displeasure with the Black liberation efforts eventually "characterized the black civil rights protests as representing a general unraveling of society" (Cooper, 1193). Adopting the Black criminality narrative continued into the Reagan administration in which the War on Drugs was declared, specifically classifying Black individuals as producers, distributors, and users of illegal drugs. Black men were targeted by expending greater authoritarian resources within Black communities and enforcing harsher punishments for minimal offenses. "The drug war as a war on men of color is what has produced racially stratified hyper-incarceration" (Cooper, 1194). The disdain for Black people of color evolves out of the reinforcement by political elites to ratify the excessive use of force against those perceived as criminal.

Cooper, Frank R. 2013. "We Are Always Already Imprisoned: Hyperincarceration and Black Male Identity Performance." *Boston University Law Review* 93(3): p1185-1204.

Naturalized Image of the Black Criminal

Of the two million inmates in U.S. jails in 2002, Black men outnumber white men 586,700 to 436,800 with sentences of more than one year, and Black women outnumbered white women 36,000 to 35,400. These numbers may appear statistically similar but when the ratio of Black to white inmates is factored into the general population, the racial disparities reveal that "Blacks are about eight times more likely to spend time behind bars than whites" (Roberts, 1274). The Reagan administration policies to aggressively target economically segregated neighborhoods and street-level enforcement of drug laws resulted in the hyper-incarceration of Black individuals and the developed perception of Black criminality. Moreover, the criminal history of these people likely affects future employment opportunities due to the discriminatory practices by employers. The rate of incarcerating a large group of people has significant implications on the social and economic status of that community. The social mechanisms that harm Black communities where mass incarceration is concentrated are "damages to social networks, distortion of social norms, and destroying social citizenship" (Roberts, 1281). These instituted methods paralyze the Black community from escaping the false narratives set by political figures. It is our responsibility, and the initiative of Black Lives Matter to take a stand against the wrongful convictions of Black individuals.

Roberts, Dorothy E. 2004. "The Social and Moral Cost of Mass Incarceration in African American Communities." *Stanford Law Review*.

Best Practices for Reducing Racial Disparities

There is always more that we can do to reduce the racial disparities that exist in our criminal justice system and Black Lives Matter looks to lead that change. Some of the best practices that can be used to reverse these oppressive policies against Black people of color can be done by you. Here are four ways to reduce racial disparities:

1. “Revise Policies and Laws with Disparate Racial Impact”

Revising policies and guidelines will help ensure that the relentless prosecution of Black people is reduced. Changing the way petty crimes are categorized is another way of revising these policies. For example, the laws regulating “stop and frisk” are being suspended in cities like New York to prevent racial profiling.

2. “Address Implicit Racial Bias Among Criminal Justice Professionals”

Addressing the individuals that are responsible for ethically conducting their job and providing a public service without prejudice or bias is a key responsibility. Attaining persons of color will largely benefit the racial disparities and educating new police officers to reduce the use of excessive force.

3. “Reallocate Resources to Create a Level Playing Field”

Reallocating the funds and resources to areas of low-income will reduce the disadvantages facing the criminal justice system. Establishing a set of resources for low-income neighborhoods to rely on is proven to decrease detention rates and gave access to educational resources.

4. “Revise Policies that Exacerbate Socioeconomic Inequalities and Redirect Public Spending Toward Crime Prevention and Drug Treatment”

There needs to be investments in mental health and substance abuse treatment, programs to reduce school truancy and prevent dropouts, and support for victim services.

Ghandnoosh, Nazgol. 2015. “Black Lives Matter: Eliminating Racial Inequity in the Criminal Justice System.” The Sentencing Project.



(Image: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/02/13/mass-incarceration-has-been-costly-and-utter-failure-report>)

#BLM

#SAYTHEIRNAME

**ERIC GARNER, MICHAEL BROWN, TAMIR RICE, WALTER L. SCOTT,
FREDDIE GRAY, PHILANDO CASTILE, SAMUEL DUBOSE, SANDRA BLAND**

Implicit Racial Bias

“Implicit racial bias is the unintentional and unconscious racial bias that affects individuals’ decisions and behaviors” (Mauer, 7). The preconceived ideologies associated with race and class directly affect criminal justice professionals. In simulations, it is often shown that these professionals are equipped to target and shoot Black individuals as potential immediate threats quicker than that of white individuals posing the same simulated threat. Experimental studies reveal that criminal justice outcomes are influenced by implicit biases in careers such as police officers, prosecutors, and judges. Although traffic stop statistics are relatively the same amongst Blacks and whites, people of color are more likely to be stopped by police for discretionary reasons (record check, vehicle defect, or no reason at all). Additionally, Blacks and people of color “were three times as likely to be searched, and Blacks were twice as likely to be arrested during a traffic stop” (Mauer, 8). The authoritative control in positions of power exceeds in prosecutorial and judicial hearings where Black defendants are likely to receive longer and harsher sentences for the same crimes as whites. Situational evidence is manipulated against Black individuals to receive fair treatment which is attributed to the perceptions of Black socioeconomic characteristics.

Mauer, Marc. Ghandnoosh, Nazgol. 2014. “Incorporating Racial Equity into Criminal Justice Reform.” The Sentencing Project.

Excessive Force

The unjustified killing of unarmed Black men deters America from any social advancement. Black men have been wrongly shot and killed at the hands of police officers, whom are soon acquitted of any charges. Even after their death, these Black men go to trial and are portrayed as criminals and tarnished for their history of engagement within the criminal justice system. This is a process of institutionalized racism and excessive use of force by police officers. Out of the large criticism of public officials, the *Washington Post* reported “a pervasive problem that is only now beginning to be recognized is the lack of training for officers... that can often escalate to violent confrontations” (2016). Police officers should already be trained to de-escalate situations involving immediate dangerous threats. This is not the case for those Black men that died within minutes of police presence.

#SayTheirName Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Tamir Rice, Walter L. Scott, Freddie Gray, Philando Castile, Samuel Dubose

Wihbey, John. Kille, Leighton Walter. 2016. “Excessive or reasonable force by police? Research on law enforcement and racial conflict.” Journalist Resource.

Driving While Black

Racial profiling controls the streets of America and targets the Black community from the foundations of the War on Drugs. This everlasting notion of Black criminality as a public narrative dominates this overtly race-based profile. “The emergence of crack in the spring of 1986... and often exaggerated press accounts of inner-city crack use ushered in a period of intense public concern about illegal drugs” (1999). This epidemic quickly led to city officials enforcing the nation’s drug laws at the street level focused on communities of color. Between 1982 and 1988, the arrests for drug possession reported by state and local police nearly doubled from 400,000 to 762,718, disproportionately representing minorities. These discriminatory practices portrayed the Blacks as drug-users and were often at the forefront of police interrogations. This emerged as the presiding initiative to take action, leading to the creation of “Operation Pipeline” by the DEA. This highway drug interdiction program has trained nearly 27,000 officers in 48 participating states to conduct pretext stops in order to find drugs in vehicles. The induction of this protocol ignites the use of racial profiling, in which case “other associated programs have implicitly encouraged the targeting of minority motorists” (1999). These racial policies by government institutions are direct contributions to the racial disparities in America’s prison system.

Harris, David A. 1999. “Driving While Black: Racial Profiling on Our Nation’s Highways.” An American Civil Liberties Union Special Report.



(Image: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-36759711>)



Advocacy

The Black Lives Matter movement has evolved to be an alternative political dominance that advocates for racial justice and the promotion for Black Liberation. It is an organization bearing the totality of a movement for Black individuals to be wholly represented and presented with the same opportunities as whites in American society. It is a continuation of the progressive forces set forth by President Barrack Obama. “With continued momentum, Black Lives Matter may help reverse the counteroffensive against workers and people of color that has defined the long aftermath of the 1960s and 1970s liberation struggles” (2016). With the sustained progressive movements, racial disparities and the perception of Black criminality will be significantly underrepresented. In times of peaceful assembly, Black Lives Matter is faced with militarization of police, and they stand silence our organization. We must continue to march and ensure that voices of those killed at the hands of police will have their voice heard. We must act congruently and with dignified purpose to develop and ideological foundation of activism and truth.

Rickford, Russell. 2016. “Black Lives Matter: Toward a Modern Practice Struggle.” New Labor Forum 25(1): p34-42.

Advocacy

The escalation of Black Lives Matter and the modern fight for Civil Rights came to a boiling point after the shooting and killing of a Black teen, Michael Brown. Violence erupted after the police officer was acquitted of all charges and the city of Ferguson, Missouri was left in chaos. There are complications of herding the youth into aligning the ideologies of the national Black political leaders struggles to find common ground. The situational difference between generations is evident in trying to connect with the “nuances of American democracy and racial struggle” (2014). To counteract the pretext of this incident, young Black Americans are realizing the dangers they face every day and want to take action. They realize that they can no longer adhere to the system and move on from a deadly shooting. Young Black Lives Matter and the same racial disparities that have targeted this community need to be at the forefront of discussion and in the face of the public. The government should no longer hide behind the history of nonviolent resistance when there is the use of excessive force against an unarmed individual. Black voices speak up for other Black voices.

Joseph, Peniel E. 2014. “How Ferguson Has Exposed a Civil Rights Generational Divide.” The Root.



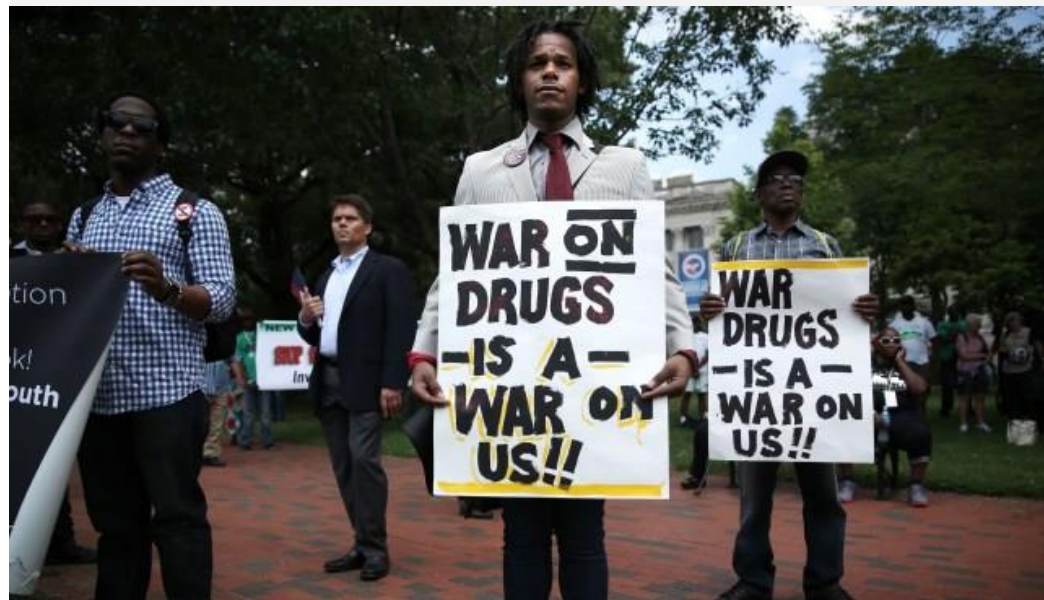
(Image: <http://www.crisismagazine.com/2016/because-all-lives-matter>)

WAR ON DRUGS

While statistics consistently prove that drug usage amongst white people and Black people are relatively similar, the enactment of drug enforcement deliberately portrayed white users as victims and Black users as criminals. The pedaling of this racial targeting increased the incarceration of the Black community and triggered the perception of the Black criminal. Over time, American society would adopt prejudicial biases toward Black people and people of color, exiling them further into socioeconomic decline and eliminating their ability for societal advancement. The War on Drugs initiated by President Nixon, and further implemented by President Reagan, “deliberately linked urban crime control to the suburban subculture... the discretionary targeting of urban black residents” (2015). Black bodies were at fault and criminalized for assumed drug usage in suburban areas at a much higher rate than that of white bodies in middle-class neighborhoods. The implementation of mandatory-minimum sentencing for “dope-pushers” sought to ensure Black individuals accused of drug use were condemned to the criminal justice system. Their punishment was significantly more severe and soon became the enemy of the nation, labeling Black individuals as a threat to national security. The black culture was threatened with criminalization without consideration, primarily for the color of their skin. We can see this today, with the public narrative of people of color, especially Latinos, as the direct link to the opioid epidemic. The nation’s public officials are calling for the criminalization of people of color and to end the trafficking of drugs across America. People of color are being singled out and unfairly targeted by the government due to preconditioned biases that stem from the War on Drugs. In *The New Jim Crow* (2010), Michelle Alexander argues that Reagan’s “drug war from the outset had little to do with public concern about drugs and much to do with public concern about race. By waging a war on drug users and dealers, Reagan made good on his promise to crack down on the racially defined ‘others.’” The proliferation of mass incarceration was not derived from the truth, it was systematically predetermined to protect the white youth of America and directly impact the Black community. What we are left with is the increased poverty rates among Black people and further descent into poor socioeconomic stature. Black Lives Matter is challenging the false narrative that persecuted the Black community by the government and discussing the reinstitution of policies that do not directly affect Black families.

Lassiter, Matthew D. 2015. “Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America's War on Drugs.” *Journal of American History* 102(1): p126-140.
Alexander, M. (2011). *The New Jim Crow*. New York, NY: New Press.

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(Image: Alex Wang/Getty Images)

Black GLBT Marginalization

The marginalization of transgender people of color and other members of the queer community is one of the deepest struggles for Black liberation. The underrepresentation of Black empowerment and access to life-saving resources underlies the importance to discuss the hyper-marginalized and intersectional communities of people of color. In a 2000 Black Pride Survey titled *Say it Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud*, the three most important issues facing Black GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender) people were 1) HIV/AIDS, 2) hate crime violence, and 3) marriage and domestic partnership. The existing heterosexual issues facing Black individuals in American society are increasingly escalated for GLBT people of color. "Of the 42,156 AIDS cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention in 2000, Black Americans accounted for 47 percent of the total even though they made up only 12 percent of the total U.S. population" (2000). This information reveals the lack of resources and access to quality health services, especially in the Black GLBT community. This endemic doesn't simply end with disease, but stems to widespread discrimination in political and social exclusions. In addition to the various disparities in daily Black America, "GLBT individuals also have to endure ongoing discrimination in employment, schools, health care access, marriage, and adoption" (2000). Being Black and GLBT implicates extra facets of marginalization from society, even within the Black community. The community should strive together to eradicate prejudicial discrimination against any member and stand together in the face of adversity. Black Lives Matter seeks to amend these broken bonds between the communities to grow stronger together.

Battle, Juan. Cohen., Cathy J. Warren, Dorian. Fergerson, Gerard. Audam, Suzette. 2000. "Say it Loud I'm Black and I'm Proud." National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Feminism and Intersectionality

Theories of intersectionality also target women directly, specifically in the workforce where the experience of being a Black female is synonymous with identifying race and sex. Whereas Black men are frequently the target of police discrimination, Black women endure the hardships of finding work and supporting themselves in a difficult socioeconomic position. It wasn't until 1964 that the "General Motors Corporation hired a Black woman for its workforce" (2014). The women's suffrage movement wasn't allotted to women of color and forced them to endure several more generations of oppressive marginalization. The incorporation of women into the Black Lives Matter movement is significant because we were founded by three women, three women tired of the mistreatment of their fellow Black community members. The term intersectionality was coined by Black legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw, in which she argues that "a key aspect of intersectionality lies in its recognition that multiple oppressions are not each suffered separately but rather as a single, synthesized experience" (2014). The Black community thrives together and succumbs to the racial disparities that exist and incorporate the experiences of women as they endure the added difficulty facing workplace gender and racial discrimination.

Smith, Sharon. 2014. "Black feminism and intersectionality." International Socialist Review.

Workplace Misrepresentation

The narrative circulating the notion that workplace segregation no longer exist is false. Even though workplace segregation is legally eradicated, this does not prevent the minorities for assuming underrated management and leadership positions and being overrepresented in low-wage work. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission conducted a study in 2007 finding that “only 20 percent of minorities are midlevel managers, despite the fact that they account for 34 percent of the total workforce” (2011). The challenging of ascending into positions of management is difficult for women of color. These pose instrumental difficulties for Black women and women of color because of the inability to demonstrate ones abilities. It is important to give women a voice and allow them to be heard. This is why we at Black Lives Matter support the #Fightfor15, a pledge to represent all underpaid women of color and workers to be provided a living wage by their employer. Companies take advantage of the socioeconomic power over those affected by poverty and women directly. To be successful at incorporating more women of color into the advanced workforce, emphasis needs to be directed at organizational responsibility and active recruiting.

Bouie, Jamelle. 2011. “The Segregated Workplace.” The American Prospect.



(Image: <https://veganethos.wordpress.com/2014/12/14/intersectionality-and-abolitionist-veganism-part-i/>)



“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta Georgia. He was a Baptist minister and prominent civil-rights activist promoting the nonviolent strategy demanding for Black equality. He was loved by millions and played a pivotal role in ending the segregation of Black people in the United States. In his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* King reassures the public, “If the inexpressible cruelties of slavery could not stop us, the opposition we now face will surely fail”. The foundation of the American dream is centered in a just and fair opportunity for all. All people, regardless of their faith, race, sexuality, or otherwise should have the same freedoms to explore the opportunities Martin Luther King Jr. envisioned for Black people.

King Jr., Martin Luther. “Letter From a Birmingham Jail.” African Studies Center-University of Pennsylvania.
(Image: <http://www.biography.com/people/martin-luther-king-jr-9365086>)



“I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I am changing the things I cannot accept...”

Angela Davis

Angela Davis was born on January 26, 1944, in Birmingham, Alabama. She is an activist, scholar and writer who advocates for the oppressed. Her most famous works criticize what she calls the “prison industrial complex”, a system of institutionalized prejudices to target and convict minorities for profit. She was accused of conspiracy against the United States but prevailed victorious after she fought the establishment in court. Davis repudiated the concept of the Black rapist and in her book *Women, Race and Class*, describes that “The myth of the Black rapist of white women is the twin of the myth of the bad Black woman—both designed to apologize for and facilitate the continued exploitation of Black men and women” (1981).

Davis, Angela Y. 1981. “Women, Race and Class.” Random House. p174
(Image: <http://www.biography.com/people/angela-davis-9267589>)

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[HTTP://BLACKLIVESMATTER.COM/](http://blacklivesmatter.com/)

GET INVOLVED!

FIND YOUR LOCAL BLM CHAPTERS:

[HTTP://BLACKLIVESMATTER.COM/FIND-CHAPTERS/](http://blacklivesmatter.com/find-chapters/)

CALL YOUR REPRESENTATIVES!

THEY REPRESENT YOU! LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE CONCERNED!

OHIO:

[HTTPS://WWW.SENATE.GOV/SENATORS/CONTACT/SENATORS_CFM.CFM?STATE=OH](https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/senators_cfm.cfm?state=oh)

RUN FOR OFFICE!

HELP OUT YOUR COMMUNITY BY BEING THE ONE THAT MAKES THE POLICIES

HOLD THEM ACCOUNTABLE!

PROTEST! UTILIZE YOUR FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND TAKE TO THE STREETS!

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!!!

Through creating this zine, I've gained more insight to the effectiveness of agitation. I've learned that the incentive to utilize rhetoric as a strategy to support your cause can have a very powerful impact. Everything that we do, all of the interactions that we have with others, the things that we say, all affect individuals directly. Whether we tolerate the ignorance of shaming minorities or we speak out for basic human rights, each day we are reinforcing our own strategies of agitation and control. The Black Lives Matter movement has an increasingly negative connotation but the emotion behind it is real. This movement is designed to challenge the establishment and reverse substantial black oppression, not to make black individuals or people of color receive better treatment; Black Lives deserve fair treatment. I'm hoping this zine is something that I can hopefully pass on to others to change the perception of Black individuals and to initiate a discussion between those that may not understand. I always say, Communication is the BEST Education.